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ABSTRACT

This booklet prepares a student to take New Jersey's Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), a test that measures the knowledge and skills that will be tested later in the state's High School Proficiency Assessment. The GEPA has three test sections (content areas): Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. The booklet tells students about the test, how grades will be reported, and what the test will be like. It describes the three content areas and contains sample questions in each area. Information is given so that the student can prepare himself or herself to take the test. A pamphlet is packaged with this booklet to describe the GEPA for parents, answering why it is given and how results are reported students ask and adding information about testing for special education students. The parent pamphlet, "Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA): Your Guide to the GEPA," is in both English and Spanish. (SLD)

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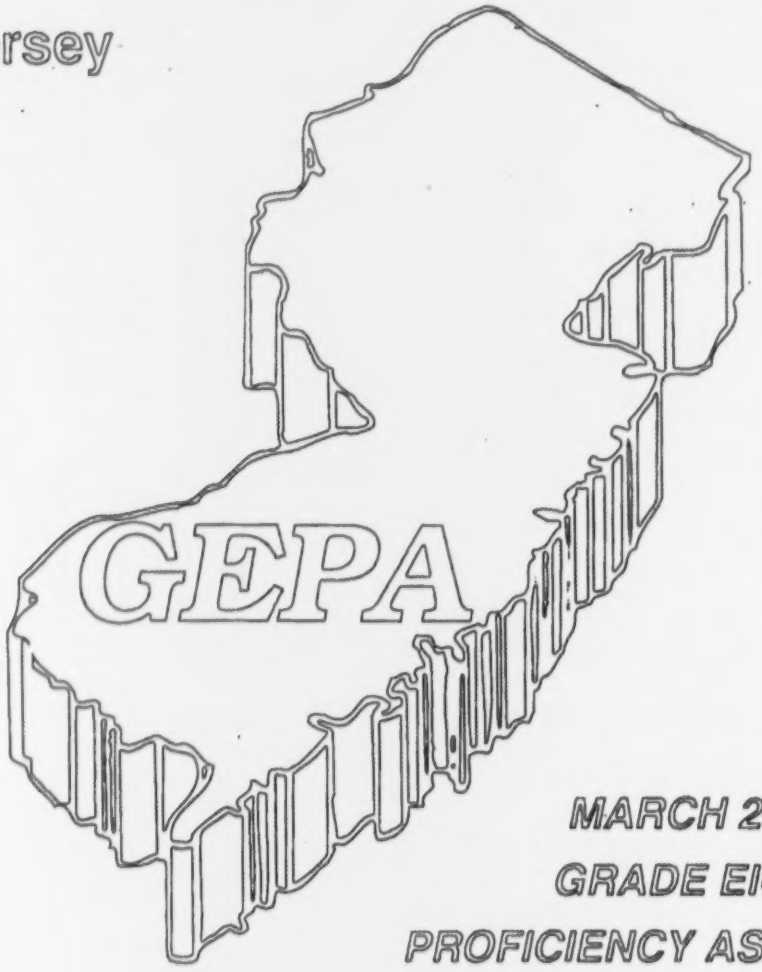

MARCH 2001
GRADE EIGHT
PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

STUDENT PREPARATION BOOKLET

TM033522

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STUDENT PREPARATION BOOKLET

WHAT IS THE GRADE EIGHT PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT?

Each March, all eighth graders in New Jersey take the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). The GEPA is designed to help you by measuring your knowledge and skills in the areas that will be tested later in the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). You will have to pass the HSPA to graduate from high school. By taking the GEPA now, you can see whether your skills in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science are where they should be at this time. If they're not, you and your teachers and parents can start now to make sure any current gaps in your knowledge or skills are filled in before you take the HSPA in three years.

The GEPA and HSPA are designed to make sure that you have the skills you will eventually need to succeed on the job, in college, or in the military, and to be a productive citizen.

The GEPA currently has three test sections, Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. You will take the test over a four-day period for approximately two hours each day: Science will be tested on Monday, March 12; Mathematics will be tested on Tuesday, March 13; and Language Arts Literacy will be tested on Wednesday and Thursday, March 14 and 15. An additional day, Friday, March 23, will be used for field testing new test items in Social Studies. Results of the field test will not be part of your scores but will be used to construct future tests in Social Studies.

HOW WILL MY SCORES BE REPORTED?

When you receive your GEPA scores, the report will show total scores in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. It will also show subtotal scores for the specific knowledge and skills measured in all content areas. The total scores will be reported in one of three proficiency levels – Advanced Proficient, Proficient, or Partially Proficient. If you have not met the appropriate level of proficiency, your school may give you additional help to further develop the skills you will need to pass the HSPA in the eleventh grade.

WHAT WILL THE TEST BE LIKE?

Like other tests you may have taken, the GEPA contains multiple-choice questions that require you to choose your response from among four answer choices (A, B, C, or D) and record it by darkening the appropriate letter's bubble in your separate answer folder. The test also contains open-ended questions that require you to either respond in your own words in written text, to draw a diagram, or to construct a numerical response, all without any answer choices available to you.

Your responses to all multiple-choice and open-ended questions must be recorded in your separate answer folder. Information recorded in your test booklet or on scratch paper does not count toward your score.

Language Arts Literacy

The Language Arts Literacy section of the test includes reading and writing activities that will measure your achievements in interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing text. The reading materials will require you to read passages selected from published books, newspapers, and magazines, as well as everyday text, and to respond to related multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

In the writing section, you will write two extended responses. You will also revise and edit the text of another.

Mathematics

The Mathematics section of the test will measure your ability to solve problems by applying mathematical concepts. The areas to be tested are: number sense, concepts, and applications; spatial sense and geometry; data analysis, probability, statistics, and discrete mathematics; and patterns, functions, and algebra.

Most mathematics questions are multiple choice, which have a weight of one point each for correct answer choices. The open-ended questions, requiring you to construct and explain your own written or graphic responses, can receive a score from 0 to 3. For 3 points, a response must show complete understanding of a problem's concepts and have a clear, effective explanation. For 2 points, there must be a nearly complete understanding of a problem's concepts, but the response may have minor errors. A 1-point response would show limited understanding of a mathematical concept and would have an incomplete explanation of how the problem was solved. A 0-point response would show insufficient understanding of the concept and may contain major errors.

You will be provided with a calculator when you take the test, and will receive a Mathematics Reference Sheet, which contains formulas and other useful information you can use during the test.

Science

The Science test will measure your knowledge in three major areas: life sciences, physical sciences, and earth sciences.

Most of the Science questions are multiple-choice questions and have a weight of one point for each correct answer. There are also open-ended questions that ask you to construct your own written and/or graphic responses. These questions can receive a score of 0 to 3 points. A 3-point answer must show a complete understanding of the problem stated. A 2-point answer must show a nearly complete understanding, with perhaps minor errors. A 1-point answer will show only a limited understanding of the problem. An answer that receives no points will show little, if any, understanding of the problem.

HOW CAN I PREPARE MYSELF TO TAKE THE GEPA?

- Relax. You will think more clearly if you are relaxed when you take a test. Dress comfortably on the day of the test so that you are at ease and not distracted. Put all your other activities on hold so that you can give all your attention and energy to taking the test and doing well.

- Get a good night's sleep the night before the test. Start your day off with a good breakfast so that you have plenty of energy to take the test.

- Don't cram. The skills measured by the GEPA are learned over a long period of time.

- Think positively. Believe that you will do your very best. Be confident of your ability.

- Read the directions carefully before beginning each part of the test. If you understand what you are supposed to do, it will save time and help you avoid careless mistakes.

- Read each question carefully. Try to answer the question before you look at the responses. If you find your answer there, mark that response. If not, ask yourself whether your answer is reasonable. Reread the question, keeping the responses in mind. Make sure that you understand what the question is asking.

- Skip a question and go on to the next one if you have no idea of the answer. Spending too much time on one question might keep you from having enough time to answer others that you do know. You should not leave any question unanswered. If there is time, you should come back to it later at the end of that part of the test.

- Pace yourself during the test. Budget your time so that you have a chance to answer all of the questions. Your teacher will periodically let you know the time remaining in the part of the test you are taking.

- Fill in your separate answer folder carefully. Make sure that you record all your responses in your separate answer folder in the right spaces. You may know the answer to a question, but if you do not mark your answer in the right place, you will not receive credit for your answer.

- Check your answers as you take the test. Make sure that you have chosen the response that best answers the question. Checking your answers as you work through the test will save time later in rethinking a question. Check your answer folder to make sure that you have darkened the correct answer space.

- Make sure that your answers are reasonable. Do you understand what the question is asking? Have you made use of all the relevant information provided to answer the question correctly? Does your response answer the question? Did you choose the best answer among those listed?

- If you aren't sure of the answer to a question, try to eliminate some of the responses. Think about the reasons why you were able to eliminate some of the choices. These reasons may provide you with the information you need to choose the correct answer. If you can eliminate some of the choices, select the remaining answer choice that makes the most sense.

- Some questions require more planning than others. This is especially true of open-ended questions and writing tasks. First, outline the steps required to respond to the question. Then, identify related information and eliminate non-related information when you can.

WHAT WILL THE GEPA LOOK LIKE?

The rest of this booklet will give you an idea of what the GEPA materials are like.

Language Arts Literacy

New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards identify five categories of Language Arts Literacy: speaking, listening, writing, reading, and viewing. These five activities are essential aspects of our everyday lives and critical to what we think, learn, communicate, and create.

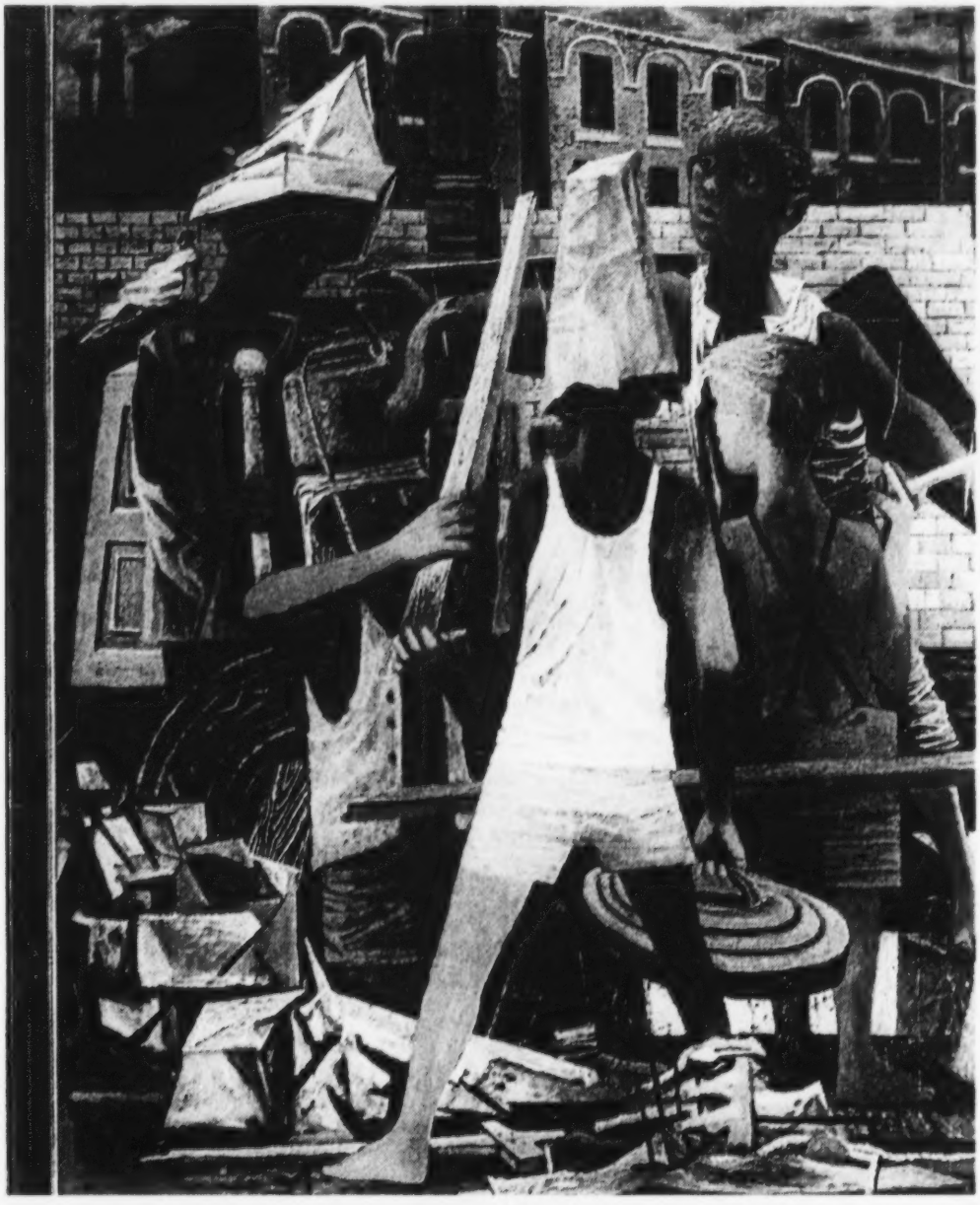
The GEPA provides a variety of activities and texts that will allow you to demonstrate your skills and knowledge in using language arts literacy. The assessment presents two types of reading passages, narrative and persuasive texts, that are followed by a set of 10 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions. The GEPA also provides two different types of writing prompts and a student text that you will revise and edit. For the two writing tasks, the test booklet provides blank pages for prewriting. Use this space to plan your ideas. Then use the lined pages in your answer folder for your written draft. As you complete these different sections of the GEPA, you will be demonstrating your skills in using language for thinking, learning, and communicating.

The GEPA's language arts literacy activities are sequenced to give you varying experiences in using language for different kinds of tasks, just as you do in your everyday lives. As preparation for taking the GEPA's language arts literacy assessment, read through the sample test materials in this booklet to familiarize yourself with the sequence and content of each test section. Also acquaint yourself with the type of scoring procedure and criteria that will be used to assess your demonstrated skills. This preview will help you understand what each task involves and how your work will be evaluated. Copies of the rubrics that will be used to score your writing are included on pages 13-15 of this booklet.

Following are sample materials illustrating the content of the GEPA's language arts literacy assessment. The reading passages are only excerpts from stories and articles that were chosen to illustrate the GEPA's texts. Complete versions of these texts are printed in the *Directory of Test Specifications for the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) and High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) in Language Arts Literacy*. That document is available in your school district.

This booklet includes an example of each writing activity and both types of questions for each reading passage. As you read through the following pages, notice that the scoring procedure for each open-ended item or activity is identified to help you understand how your work will be assessed.

One writing task begins with a picture that serves as a prompt for a story. The setting and characters portrayed in the picture suggest an event or relationship that you are invited to develop and describe through a story. In this activity you may speculate about what has happened, what is happening, or what will happen at some other time. Use your imagination to create a good story that is detailed and vivid. The answer folder will provide two lined pages for your writing.



Writing Task A

Every picture tells a story, but the stories we see may be different. Look closely at this picture. What story is it telling? Use your imagination to speculate what the story is about or to describe what is happening.

SCORING PROCEDURE: Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric - Page 13

A second writing activity will introduce a controversial issue that you will address in a persuasive letter or essay. Following is an example of a writing prompt that focuses on a controversial issue.

WRITING SITUATION

In an effort to limit the amount of littering on school grounds, the Board of Education is thinking about requiring all eighth graders to take a half-year, after-school course called "Taking Care of Your Environment." Some students believe this is a good idea; others argue against it. What is your point of view?

Your principal is preparing a report on the proposed requirement for the Board of Education and has asked each student to write a letter either supporting or opposing the requirement. Think about the effect this requirement would have on you and other students in your school. How would this requirement change the situation in your school?

DIRECTIONS for WRITING TASK

Write a letter to your principal explaining your position on this controversial issue. Use facts, examples, and other evidence to support your opinion of the proposed requirement.

The answer folder will provide four lined pages for this writing task. In addition, you will have blank pages in the test booklet to use for planning your writing. The planning space is for your benefit because it gives you a place to brainstorm and organize your ideas before you begin writing. Readers who score your writing will consider the organization and elaboration of key ideas and details as well as grammar and sentence structure. Only your writing in your answer folder will be scored.

SCORING PROCEDURE: Registered Holistic Scoring Rubric - Page 13

The third writing activity focuses on a student's essay that needs revising and editing. The essay will present a variety of problems in organization, elaboration of details, sentence structure, usage, word choice, punctuation, and spelling. In this activity, you will decide what to change to improve the essay. Since there is not one right way to complete this task, your revisions may be quite different from the revisions your classmates make. To begin, read through the essay first to acquaint yourself with the writer's ideas.

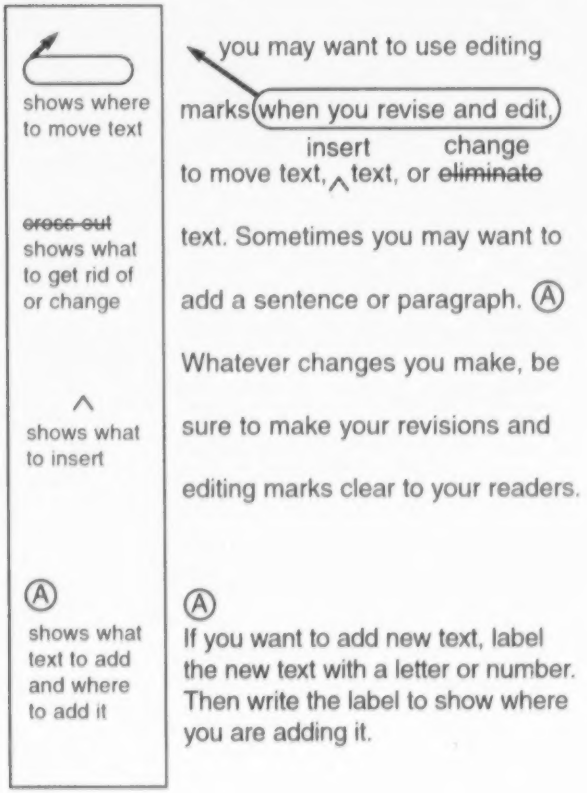
The student's essay will be printed in your answer folder to allow you to make changes directly on the text. The test materials will include a Revising/Editing Guide to help you focus on the kinds of writing problems you may encounter. The guide also illustrates four editing marks, which are simple ways to show your revisions. If you have learned other editing marks, such as ¶ which means "start a new paragraph," you may use them too.

The answer folder also provides two lined pages for you to use if you want to reorganize the entire essay or if you decide to add new text. Those pages are there to make it easy for you to complete the task, but you are not required to copy the essay onto those pages.

This task provides you with an opportunity to show what you know about revising and editing. What is most important is that your revisions develop the student's ideas and improve the clarity of the text. It is also important that your changes are clear and neat to help readers understand what revisions you are making.

SCORING PROCEDURE: Revising/Editing Scoring Guide - Page 14

Revising/Editing Guide


shows where to move text
cross out
shows what to get rid of or change
^
shows what to insert
Ⓐ
shows what text to add and where to add it
you may want to use editing marks when you revise and edit, insert change to move text, ^ text, or eliminate text. Sometimes you may want to add a sentence or paragraph. Ⓐ Whatever changes you make, be sure to make your revisions and editing marks clear to your readers.
Ⓐ
If you want to add new text, label the new text with a letter or number. Then write the label to show where you are adding it.

What to consider when you revise and edit:

CONTENT/ORGANIZATION

1. opening and closing
2. development of key ideas
3. logical progression of ideas
4. supporting details
5. transitions

SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

6. correct sentence structure (syntax)
7. varied sentence structure

USAGE

8. correct verb tenses
9. subject/verb agreement
10. pronoun usage and agreement
11. word choice

MECHANICS

12. spelling
13. capitalization
14. punctuation

One student has written a letter to the school newspaper opposing a community service requirement in your school district. Read the first draft and think about how to improve the meaning and the clarity of the text. Then make your revisions.

Dear Editor,

(A)

~~I am writing you this letter to let you know how I feel about the proposal. Even though many people would probally disagree, I feel very strongly for it and I hope everything goes as planed.~~

Certainly, some

(B)

~~I'm sure there will be~~ students ~~who~~ will feel that they shouldn't have to ~~do this, but if you think about it, they really should. This is our~~ community. We should be mature and responsible enough ~~to~~ to take ~~out~~ that little time to help others and make our community a better one.

(C)

~~Although I feel this is a great idea, I don't feel it should be a requirement. If there are some people who don't feel they have to do this then let them be. There will be people who would have to help our community including me and we will feel great about ourselves afterwards.~~

~~Helping~~ others ~~and doing things to help others and out community~~ will make me feel really good about myself. ~~I'm hope this will all go through and~~ I'm sure that other students will ~~it will. We just have to get everyone to~~ feel the same way.

I support the school districts proposed community service requirement.

~~Now I would just like to thank you for listening to my thoughts and ideas.~~ I hope this ~~becomes~~ program is a big success.

Yours truly,

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(A) The school district's proposed community service requirement is clearly a good idea. Although some people may disagree with the proposal, the community service program will contribute both to our community and to those who participate in it.

(B) take on this additional assignment. They will argue that the demands of their academic and extracurricular activities already leave very little time for fun and relaxation. However, all of us should support this program. After all, students are part of this

(C) In addition to helping the community, the new community service program will benefit the students themselves. Those who participate in the program will develop confidence and self-respect when they see that they can make a difference in other peoples' lives. I know that helping

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

SERIAL #

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The GEPA also presents a narrative reading passage, followed by 10 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions that relate to the text. The answer folder will provide one full-lined page for responses to each open-ended question.

People wear many faces. As writer Robert Cormier illustrates in the following story, life challenges us to discover which is our true face.

The Moustache
by Robert Cormier

At the last minute Annie couldn't go. She was invaded by one of those twenty-four-hour flu bugs that sent her to bed with a fever, moaning about the fact that she'd also have to break her date with Handsome Harry Arnold that night. We call him Handsome Harry because he's actually handsome, but he's also a nice guy, cool, and he doesn't treat me like Annie's kid brother, which I am, but like a regular person. Anyway, I had to go to Lawnrest alone that afternoon. But first of all I had to stand inspection. My mother lined me up against the wall. She stood there like a one-man firing squad. Which is kind of funny because she's not like a man at all, she's very feminine, and we have this great relationship—I mean, I feel as if she really likes me. I realize that sounds strange, but I know guys whose mothers love them and cook special stuff for them and worry about them and all but there's something missing in their relationship.

Anyway. She frowned and started the routine.

"That hair," she said. Then admitted: "Well, at least you combed it."

I sighed. I have discovered that it's better to

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scholarship, for instance. Cindy wasn't exactly crazy about the moustache, either.

Now it was my mother's turn to sigh.

"Look," I said, to cheer her up. "I'm thinking about shaving it off." Even though I wasn't. Another discovery: You can build a way of life on postponement.

"Your grandmother probably won't even recognize you," she said. And I saw the shadow fall across her face.

Let me tell you what the visit to Lawnrest was all about. My grandmother is seventy-three years old. She is a resident—which is supposed to be a better word than *patient*—at the Lawnrest Nursing Home. She used to make the greatest turkey dressing in the world and was a nut about baseball and could even quote batting averages, for crying out loud. She always rooted for the losers. She was in love with the Mets until they started to win. Now she has arteriosclerosis, which the dictionary says is "a chronic disease characterized by abnormal thickening and hardening of the arterial walls." Which really means that she can't live at home anymore or even with us, and her memory has betrayed her as well as her body. She used to wander off and sometimes didn't recognize people. My mother visits her all the time, driving the thirty miles

1. The turning point of the story occurs when Mike

   A. realizes he is not wearing a Chesterfield coat.
   B. accepts the role of his grandfather.
   C. speeds home from Lawnrest.
   D. shaves off his moustache.

2. Mike's attitude toward his grandmother changes from the beginning of the story to the end.

   - At the beginning of the story, how does Mike feel about visiting his grandmother?
   - How does Mike's attitude to his grandmother change during his visit to the nursing home?
   - Will Mike visit his grandmother in the nursing home again? Why or why not?

   Use information from the story to support your response.

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SCORING PROCEDURE: Open-Ended Scoring Rubric - Page 15

You will also read a persuasive passage and then answer 10 multiple-choice and two open-ended questions that relate to and extend your understanding of the text. The answer folder will provide one full-lined page for each open-ended question.

Different perspectives give life texture. Suzanne Britt presents one aspect of life that may give you a different slant on an old theme.

Neat People vs. Sloppy People
by Suzanne Britt

I've finally figured out the difference between neat people and sloppy people. This distinction is, as always, moral. Neat people are lazier and meaner than sloppy people.

Sloppy people, you see, are not really sloppy. Their sloppiness is merely the unfortunate consequence of their extreme moral rectitude. Sloppy people carry in their mind's eye a heavenly vision, a precise plan, that is so stupendous, so perfect, it can't be achieved in this world or the next.

Sloppy people live in Never-Never Land. Someday is their metier. Someday they are planning to alphabetize all their books and set up home catalogues. Someday they will go through their wardrobes and mark certain items for tentative mending and certain items for passing on to relatives of similar shape and size. Someday sloppy people will make family scrapbooks into which they will put newspaper clippings, postcards, locks of hair, and the dried corsage from their senior prom. Someday they will file everything on the surface of their desks, including the cash receipts from coffee purchases at the snack shop. Someday they will sit [illegible] reading books of The New Yorker

hours or two weeks into the excavation, the desk looks exactly the same, primarily because the sloppy person is meticulously creating new piles of paper with new headings and scrupulously stopping to read all the old book catalogs before he throws them away. A neat person would just bulldoze the desk.

Neat people are bums and clods at heart. They have cavalier attitudes toward possessions, including family heirlooms. Everything is just another dust-catcher to them. If anything collects dust, it's got to go and that's that. Neat people will toy with the idea of throwing the children out of the house just to cut down on the clutter.

Neat people don't care about process. They like results. What they want to do is get the whole thing over with so they can sit down and watch the rasslin' on TV. Neat people operate on two unvarying principles: Never handle any item twice, and throw everything away. The only thing messy in a neat person's house is the trash can. The minute something comes to a neat person's hand, he will look at it, try to decide if it has immediate use and finding none, throw it in the trash.

1. Which of the following sets of words BEST describes the author's attitude toward neat people?

   A. insensitive, economical, and disorganized

   B. noble, loving, and meticulous

   C. noble, ambitious, and vicious

   ☺ D. vicious, lazy, and cavalier

2. In paragraph 4, the author states that sloppy people "never get neat. They aim too high and wide."

   - Explain what the author means by the statement "They aim too high and too wide."
   - Do you agree with the author? Why or why not?

   Use information from the passage to support your response.

SCORING PROCEDURE: Open-Ended Scoring Rubric - Page 15

NEW JERSEY REGISTERED HOLISTIC SCORING RUBRIC

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and Organization	• May lack opening and/or closing	• May lack opening and/or closing	• May lack opening and/or closing	• May lack opening and/or closing	• Generally has opening and closing	• Has opening and closing
	• Minimal response to topic; uncertain focus	• Attempts to focus • May drift or shift focus	• Usually has single focus	• Single focus	• Single focus • Sense of unity and coherence • Key ideas developed	• Single, distinct focus • Unified and coherent • Well-developed
	• No planning evident; disorganized	• Attempts organization • Few, if any, transitions between ideas	• Some lapses or flaws in organization • May lack some transitions between ideas	• Ideas loosely connected • Transitions evident	• Logical progression of ideas • Moderately fluent • Attempts compositional risks	• Logical progression of ideas • Fluent, cohesive • Compositional risks successful
	• Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent	• Details lack elaboration, i.e., highlight paper	• Repetitious details • Several unelaborated details	• Uneven development of details	• Details appropriate and varied	• Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or pertinent
Usage	• No apparent control • Severe/numerous errors	• Numerous errors	• Errors/patterns of errors may be evident	• Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	• Few errors	• Very few, if any, errors
Sentence Construction	• Assortment of incomplete and/or incorrect sentences	• Excessive monotony/same structure • Numerous errors	• Little variety in syntax • Some errors	• Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	• Few errors	• Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics	• Errors so severe they detract from meaning	• Numerous serious errors	• Patterns of errors evident	• No consistent pattern of errors • Some errors that do not interfere with meaning	• Few errors	• Very few, if any, errors

NON-SCORABLE RESPONSES*

(FR)	Fragment	Student wrote too little to allow a reliable judgment of his/her writing.
(OT)	Off Topic/ Off Task	Student did not write on the assigned topic/task, or the student attempted to copy the prompt.
(NE)	Not English	Student wrote in a language other than English.
(NR)	No Response	Student refused to write on the topic, or the writing task folder was blank.

Content/Organization	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
• Communicates intended message to intended audience • Relates to topic • Opening and closing • Focused • Logical progression of ideas • Transitions • Appropriate details and information	• Tense formation • Subject-verb agreement • Pronouns usage/agreement • Word choice/meaning • Proper modifiers	• Variety of formations • Correct construction	• Skills intact in: • Spelling • Capitalization • Punctuation

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REVISING/EDITING SCORING GUIDE

Score Point Scale	0	1	2	3	4
Content/Organization • central focus • relevant supporting details • use of transitions and other devices to ensure cohesiveness	no attention to opening or closing; no focus; no organization of ideas	minimal attention to opening or closing; some details but no elaboration; no transitions; unable to focus	limited attention to opening and/or closing; progression of ideas but flawed or uneven; may attempt to use transitions	general attention to opening and closing; sense of focus; some use of transitions, but uneven development may be overlooked	consistent attention to opening and closing; single, distinct focus; organization and elaboration of ideas; logical and cohesive use of transitions
Sentence Construction • subordination/coordination • sentence fragments and run-on sentences • sentence combining • additional words to complete meaning	incomplete/incorrect sentences	some sentence construction but marked by monotony and/or awkward syntax; no sense of rhetorical modes	some control of syntax; simple sentence structure, but little or no variety	control of syntax; eliminates excessive monotony; varied sentence structure	syntactic and rhetorical sophistication; subordination and coordination; avoids wordiness
Usage • verbs (tense/agreement) • pronouns (number/agreement) • parallel structure • correct modifiers	numerous and/or serious errors ignored; inability to apply rules	some errors corrected but generally inconsistent application of rules	inconsistent in correcting errors; knowledge of rules but inability to utilize them effectively or consistently	errors corrected, but some may be overlooked; general knowledge and application of rules	knowledge and application of rules, leaving few, if any, errors
Mechanics • spelling • punctuation • capitalization	numerous and serious errors are ignored; inability to apply rules	inability to apply rules; errors, but inconsistently corrected; may create some errors where none existed	knowledge of rules, but some inconsistency in application; patterns of errors remain	errors, though some may be overlooked; knowledge and application of rules	errors, leaving few, if any; knowledge and application of rules
Word choice	no attention to word choice	limited word choice	relies on familiar vocabulary	varied vocabulary with some use of rich words	consistent use of rich words and images to develop topic

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OPEN-ENDED SCORING RUBRIC

For Reading, Listening, and Viewing

Sample Task: The author takes a strong position on voting rights for young people. Use information from the text to support your response to the following.

***Requirements:**

- Explain the author's position on voting.
- Explain how adopting such a position would affect young people like you.

Points	Criteria
4	A 4-point response clearly demonstrates understanding of the task, completes all requirements, and provides an insightful explanation/opinion that links to or extends aspects of the text.
3	A 3-point response demonstrates an understanding of the task, completes all requirements, and provides some explanation/opinion using situations or ideas from the text as support.
2	A 2-point response may address all of the requirements, but demonstrates a partial understanding of the task, and uses text incorrectly or with limited success resulting in an inconsistent or flawed explanation.
1	A 1-point response demonstrates minimal understanding of the task, does not complete the requirements, and provides only a vague reference to or no use of the text.
0	A 0-point response is irrelevant or off-topic.

***Requirements for these items will vary according to the task.**

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Mathematics

The questions on the GEPA mathematics assessment can be divided into four content clusters. Each of these clusters reflects knowledge and skills specified in New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) Mathematics Clusters

I. Number Sense, Concepts, and Applications

A. Make appropriate estimations and approximations.

B. Understand numbers, our numeration system, and their applications in real-world situations.

C. Use ratios, proportions, and percents in a variety of situations.

II. Spatial Sense and Geometry

A. Recognize, identify, and represent spatial relationships and geometric properties.

B. Apply the principles of congruence, similarity, symmetry, geometric transformations, and coordinate geometry.

C. Apply the principles of measurement and geometry to solve problems involving direct and indirect measurement.

III. Data Analysis, Probability, Statistics, and Discrete Mathematics

A. Predict, determine, interpret, and use probabilities.

B. Collect, organize, represent, analyze, and evaluate data.

C. Apply the concepts and methods of discrete mathematics to model and explore a variety of practical situations.

D. Use iterative patterns and processes to describe real-world situations and solve problems.

IV. Patterns, Functions, and Algebra

A. Recognize, create, and extend a variety of patterns and use inductive reasoning to understand and represent mathematical and other real-world phenomena.

B. Use algebraic concepts and processes to concisely express, analyze, and model real-world situations.

Types of Questions

The multiple-choice (MC) questions on the GEPA Mathematics test assess higher-level cognitive processes than the questions in traditional multiple-choice tests. It is anticipated that you will take an average of between one and two minutes to answer each MC question. The answers are computer scored and have a weight of one point each.

Open-ended (OE) questions require you to construct your own written or graphical responses and explain your responses. It is anticipated that students will take approximately ten minutes to answer each OE question. Your responses are hand scored on a scale from 0 to 3.

The general scoring guide on the next page was created to help readers score open-ended questions consistently within a single test and across different forms of that test. This scoring guide is used by the trained readers who will score the Mathematics open-ended questions on the eighth-grade test.

The following table shows you how many multiple-choice and open-ended questions to expect.

Question Type	Number of Questions
	8th Grade
MC	40
OE	8

Scoring Guide for Mathematics Open-Ended (OE) Questions (Generic Rubric)

3-Point Response

The response shows complete understanding of the problem's essential mathematical concepts. The student executes procedures completely and gives relevant responses to all parts of the task. The response contains few minor errors, if any. The response contains a clear, effective explanation detailing how the problem was solved so that the reader does not need to infer how and why decisions were made.

2-Point Response

The response shows nearly complete understanding of the problem's essential mathematical concepts. The student executes nearly all procedures and gives relevant responses to most parts of the task. The response may have minor errors. The explanation detailing how the problem was solved may not be clear, causing the reader to make some inferences.

1-Point Response

The response shows limited understanding of the problem's essential mathematical concepts. The response and procedures may be incomplete and/or may contain major errors. An incomplete explanation of how the problem was solved may contribute to questions as to how and why decisions were made.

0-Point Response

The response shows insufficient understanding of the problem's essential mathematical concepts. The procedures, if any, contain major errors. There may be no explanation of the solution or the reader may not be able to understand the explanation. The reader may not be able to understand how and why decisions were made.

The above generic rubric is used as a guide to develop specific scoring guides or rubrics for each of the open-ended (OE) questions that appear on the New Jersey fourth-grade (ESPA), eighth-grade (GEPA) and eleventh-grade (HSPA) proficiency assessments in Mathematics. The generic rubric helps insure that students are scored in the same way for the same demonstration of knowledge and skills regardless of the test question.

GEPA MATHEMATICS SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Cluster I, Macro A

1. Liang got an answer of about 3.87 when she entered 15 on her calculator and pressed the ($\sqrt{\ }$) key. As usual, she stopped to think briefly about whether or not her calculator's answer was reasonable. Which of the following statements is the most likely explanation for her to believe that her calculator's answer is or is not reasonable?

   A. It is not reasonable, because the answer should be a whole number.

   * B. It is reasonable because 3 squared is 9 while 4 squared is 16.

   C. It is not reasonable because the answer should be only slightly more than 3.

   D. It is reasonable, because 15 is an odd number.

Rationale: The correct answer is B. The $\sqrt{9} = 3$ and the $\sqrt{16} = 4$. Therefore, when calculating the $\sqrt{15}$, it is reasonable to expect the answer to lie between 3 and 4, and to be closer to 4 than to 3 because 15 is closer to 16 than it is to 9.

Cluster I, Macro B

2. Find all of the numbers that satisfy the following statements:

   1. I am a positive integer less than 100.

   2. Two more than my value is a multiple of 6.

   3. The sum of my digits is a multiple of 7.

   Show all of your work and explain the process you use to find the solution completely.

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Rationale: From statement 1, we have the positive integers less than 100, i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, ..., 98, 99.

From statement 2 we conclude the number is 2 less than the multiples of 6 that are less than 100. The following numbers are multiples of 6 less than 100: 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54, 60, 66, 72, 78, 84, 90, and 96. The number you are looking for, therefore, is from among the following list: 4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70, 76, 82, 88, and 94.

From statement 3, the sum of the digits in the number is a multiple of 7. The numbers 16, 34, 52, and 70 are responses that meet all the criteria given.

Cluster I, Macro C

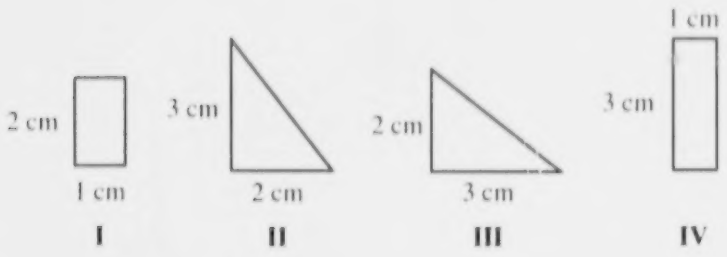
3. If 4 out of 7 people in Swedesboro use Ultrawhite Laundry Detergent, find the approximate number of people that use Ultrawhite if there are 5271 people in Swedesboro.

   A. 1757
   B. 3012
   C. 5260
   D. 9975

The correct answer is B.

Cluster II, Macro A

4. The figures below are either right triangles or rectangles.



Which shapes can be placed together, without overlap, to form a square? Each of your figures may be used only once.

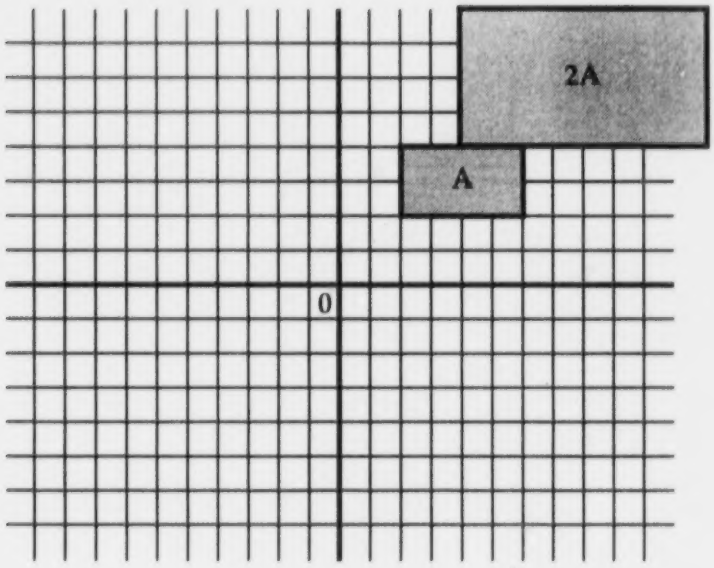
A. II and III

B. I, II, and III

• C. II, III, and IV

D. I and IV

Rationale: The correct answer is C. By definition a square has 4 congruent sides. Only by rotating and combining pieces II, III, and IV can a figure be constructed that meets this qualification. Either Figure II or Figure III must be flipped over to form the square.



5. Figure A above is the original. Figure 2A is an expansion of A from the origin by a factor of 2.

   - Draw a similar figure with a magnitude of $\frac{1}{2}$ A.
   - Draw figure –A by multiplying the coordinates of points on A by a negative 1 (the multiplication by negatives reverses directions).
   - Give the coordinates of the vertices of rectangle –A.

Rationale: A figure similar to *A* with a magnitude of $\frac{1}{2}$ *A* would have dimensions 1 unit by 2 units.

The coordinates of figure *A* are (2,2), (2,4), (6,4), and (6,2). If the coordinates are multiplied by –1, the resulting figure, –*A*, would have coordinates (–2,–2), (–2,–4), (–6,–4), and (–6,–2).

Cluster II, Macro C

6. Two paper clips weigh about 1 gram. Which is the best estimate of the number of paper clips in a kilogram package?

   A. 500
   B. 1000
   * C. 2000
   D. 4000

Rationale: The correct answer is C. There are 1000 grams in one kilogram. If 2 paperclips weigh 1 gram, then 2000 paper clips would weigh approximately 1 kg.

Cluster III, Macro A

7. Jeremy has a fair coin and a number cube with the sides labeled 1 through 6.

   What is the probability of getting both a head on a toss of the coin and a 4 on a roll of the number cube?

   A. $\frac{2}{3}$

   B. $\frac{1}{2}$

   C. $\frac{1}{3}$

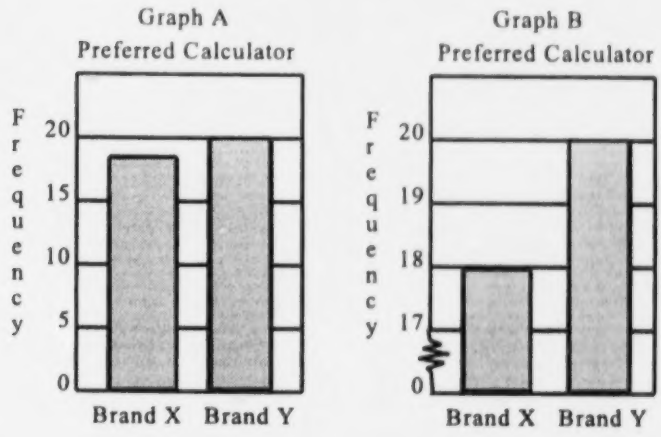
   * D. $\frac{1}{12}$

Rationale: The correct answer is D. The probability of success on both events is equal to the product of the individual probabilities, i.e.,

$$\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{6} = \frac{1}{12}$$

Cluster III, Macro B

8. Jackie is preparing a presentation for her boss. She displayed her data in two different graphs.

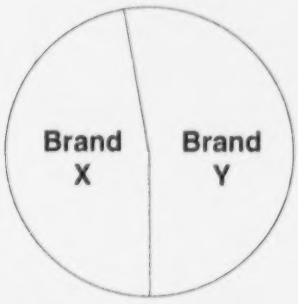


- If Jackie is trying to convince her boss that Brand X is an acceptable choice, which graph should she use in her presentation and why?

- Display the same data using another type of graph, other than a bar graph, that would also allow Jackie to convince her boss that brand X is acceptable.

Rationale: The representation of the data in graph *A* seems to show a very small difference between the two brands *X* and *Y*. If Jackie is trying to convince her boss that Brand *X* is acceptable, this graph indicates that studies show little preference for *Y* over *X*. Graph *B*, because of the vertical scale used in the presentation, visually indicates a strong preference for Brand Y. The small difference between the two products is exaggerated due to the vertical scale.

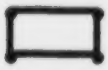
A circle graph is another way that this information could be presented. Assuming each person polled could only vote for one choice, there is a total of 38 people in the survey. The portion of the circle graph representing those who preferred Brand X would be $18/38 \cdot 360^\circ \doteq 170^\circ$. Brand Y would be $20/38 \cdot 360^\circ \doteq 190^\circ$.



Cluster III, Macro C

9. Four cities are to be connected with roads so that it is possible to drive between any 2 of the cities without passing through another city. Select the network that *best* represents this situation.

A.

B. 

C.

* D.

Rationale: The correct answer is *D*. Only this network allows a person to drive between any 2 cities without passing through another city.

Cluster IV, Macro A

10. The sequence 5, 25, 125, 625, ... continues indefinitely. Analyze it in order to answer the following questions.

    - What is the 7th term of the sequence?
    - Describe the pattern you see in the sequence.
    - What algebraic expression represents the *nth* term?

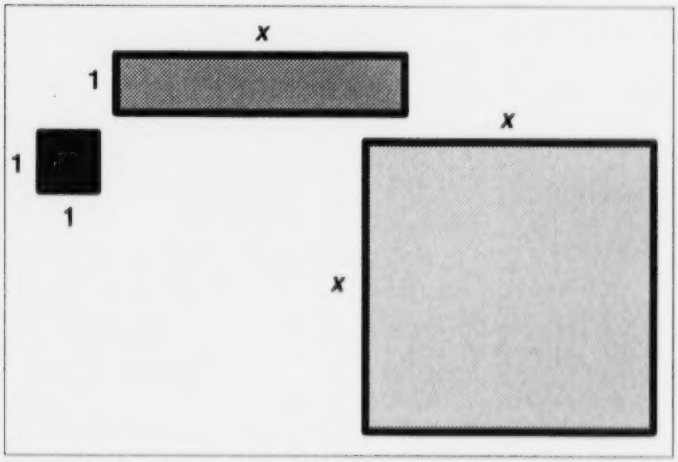
Rationale: Each term of the sequence represents a power of 5.

Term:	5	25	125	625
	5^1	5^2	5^3	5^4

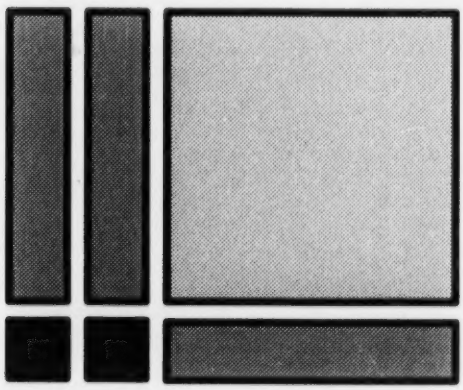
Therefore, the 7^{th} term of the sequence will be 5^7 which is equal to 78,125. The n^{th} term is represented algebraically by 5^n.

Cluster IV, Macro B

11. The Mathematics Reference Sheet provided to all students during testing will show:



The tiles on your Mathematics Reference Sheet were used to construct the diagram below.



Which algebraic expression does this diagram represent?

A. $x + 2$

B. $x^2 + 3x + 2$

C. $x + 1$

D. $x^2 + 2x + 3$

Rationale: The correct answer is *B*. Each small square has side length 1 with area 1; each rectangle has dimensions $1 \times x$ with area of x, and the large square has side length x with area of x^2. The area of the region can be represented algebraically by the expression $(x + 1)(x + 2)$ which is equal to $x^2 + 3x + 2$.

Science

The purpose of New Jersey's GEPA Science test is to measure what you know and are able to do in science at the eighth-grade level. Your knowledge in science can be broken down into cognitive skills (including conceptual understanding, history of science, and systems) and process skills (including problem solving, mathematics, and technology).

Content Areas

The GEPA measures knowledge and skills in three content areas – life sciences, physical sciences, and earth sciences – which are subdivided into related topics.

Life Sciences – The Structure of Living Things: You should be able to recognize the similarities, differences, interdependencies, and basic structures of living things.

Life Sciences – Diversity: You should understand the effects of heredity and environment on the variation, survival, and evolution of a species.

Life Sciences – Ecology and the Environment: You should recognize the environment as a system of interdependent components affected by human activity and natural phenomena.

Physical Sciences – Matter – Properties: You should be able to describe the characteristic properties of matter and demonstrate how substances can be combined or separated.

Physical Sciences – Matter – Atoms: You should be able to explain how, in a closed system when materials react with each other, many changes can take place. However, in every case, the total amount of matter afterward is the same as before.

Physical Sciences – Force and Motion: You should be able to demonstrate and explain how the motion of an object is affected by one or more forces.

Physical Sciences – Energy: You should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the various forms of energy, including their transformations and interactions with matter.

Earth Sciences – Structure of the Earth: You should be able to explain how the Earth's crust and its surrounding "oceans" of water and air are affected by a dynamic series of interrelated natural processes that cause changes to both Earth's physical features and living things.

Earth Sciences – The Universe: You should be able to identify and compare the components of the solar system and explain how the position of the Sun and Moon affects events on Earth.

Knowledge and Skills

You should be familiar with the knowledge and skills in the content areas listed above as well as the knowledge and skills sets defined below.

Knowledge – History of Science: You should recognize the historical origin of scientific theories and the fact that these theories are developed by people who live in their cultural/historical context. These theories are tested and may be replaced, based on new information and investigative techniques.

Knowledge – Systems: You should understand that the behavior of a system may be cyclical in nature and may be different from the behavior of the individual components of the system.

Skill – Problem Solving: You should be able to demonstrate problem-solving, decision-making, and inquiry skills.

Skill – Mathematics: You should be able to integrate mathematics as a tool for problem-solving in science, and as a means of expressing and/or modeling scientific theories.

Skill – Technology: You should understand that technology is an application of scientific principles.

Types of Questions

The multiple-choice questions on the GEPA Science test measure higher-level thinking than the questions in traditional tests. It will probably take you an average of one minute to answer each multiple-choice question. The answers to these questions will be computer-scored and will have a weight of one point each.

Open-ended questions ask you to create your own written or graphical answers and explain them. It will probably take you about five minutes to answer each open-ended question. Your answers are hand-scored on a scale from 0 through 3.

The Scoring Guide that follows was created to help readers score your open-ended answers consistently within a single test and across different forms of that test. The scoring guide is used by these trained readers to score the open-ended Science questions on the eighth-grade test. In addition to the generic scoring guide, a specific scoring guide is developed for each open-ended question in the test.

The following table shows you how many multiple-choice and open-ended questions to expect.

Question Type	Number of Questions 8th Grade
Multiple Choice	60
Open Ended	4

Scoring Guide for Science Open-Ended Questions

The 0-3 point scoring guide below was created to help readers score open-ended responses consistently. In scoring, the reader will accept the use of appropriate diagrams, charts, formulas, and/or symbols which are part of a correct answer even when the question does not specifically request their use.

3-point response	Student response is reasonably complete, clear, and satisfactory.
2-point response	Student response has minor omissions and/or some incorrect information.
1-point response	Student response includes some correct information, but most information included in the response is either incorrect or not relevant.
0-point response	Student attempts the task but the response is incorrect, not relevant, or inappropriate.

GEPA SCIENCE SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Life Science – Diversity; Conceptual Understanding

1. A one-celled organism has reproduced by dividing itself into two parts. What is true of the two new cells formed?

   A. The offspring cells are always different from the parent cell, as children are always somewhat different from their parents.

   B. The two new cells will be unable to reproduce, because they were formed through asexual reproduction.

   C. Each of the new cells will have twice as much genetic material as the parent cell had.

   * D. The genes in the nucleus of the offspring cells are identical to the genes that were in the nucleus of the parent cell.

Rationale: The correct answer is D. Some organisms reproduce asexually resulting in an offspring that is genetically identical to the parent. Genetically identical organisms share identical characteristics.

Life Sciences – Ecology and the Environment; Systems

2. Which of the following statements describes the energy changes involved in an ecosystem?

   A. The largest animals usually provide the energy for smaller animals and for plants in a given ecosystem.

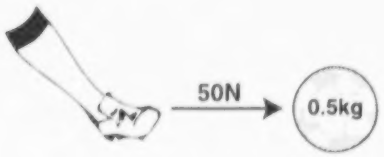
   B. The sun's energy is made available to an ecosystem by the plants in that ecosystem.

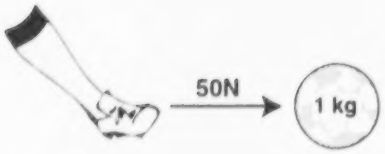
   C. The energy for living plants and animals in an ecosystem comes mainly from dead animals, which are broken down by decomposers.

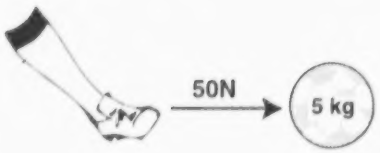
   D. In an ecosystem, the smaller organisms require more energy than larger organisms.

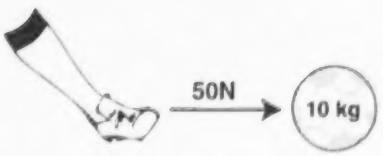
Rationale: The correct answer is B. Within almost all ecosystems, the sun is the ultimate source of energy and its energy is converted by plants into a form useful to animals within the system. Size does not correlate to either energy usage or placement in the food chain. Decomposition is a relatively minor source of energy in most food chains.

3. The illustrations show soccer balls of different masses being kicked with equal force. Which ball will have the greatest acceleration?

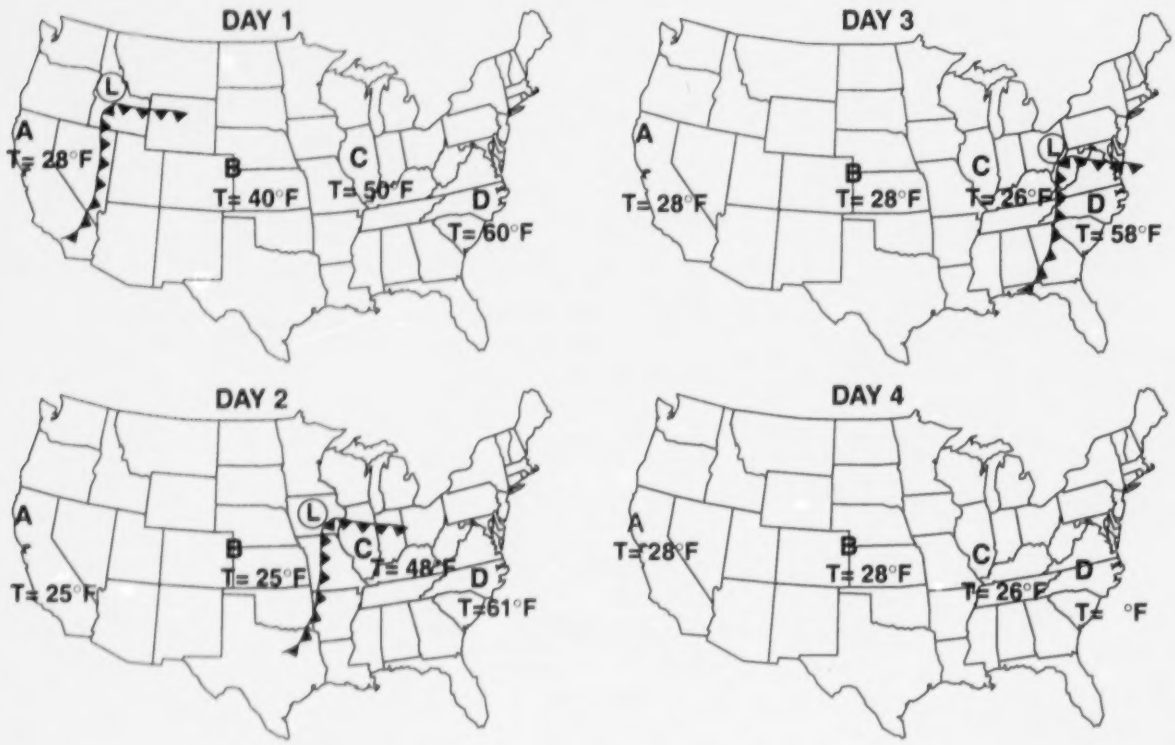
A. 

B. 

C. 

D. 

Rationale: The correct answer is A. Since the force is equal in all four cases, the ball with the least mass will have the greatest acceleration.



4. Using the information on the maps for Days 1 - 3:

   - Forecast the location of the front on Day 4 and draw the front in the correct location on the map for Day 4.
   - Forecast the temperature for city D on Day 4, and give the reasoning for your forecast.

Rationale: You should draw the front on Day 4 as a cold front off the eastern coast of the United States. The temperature in City D should be between 25 and 35 degrees Fahrenheit. You should explain that the weather maps show that the front is a cold front moving from west to east, and lowering the temperature as it passes.

Earth Sciences – Structure of the Earth; History of Science

5. A scale has been created that measures the magnitude of total energy released in an earthquake. This scale is known as the

   A. pH scale.
   B. Celsius scale.
   C. Mohs scale.
* D. Richter scale.

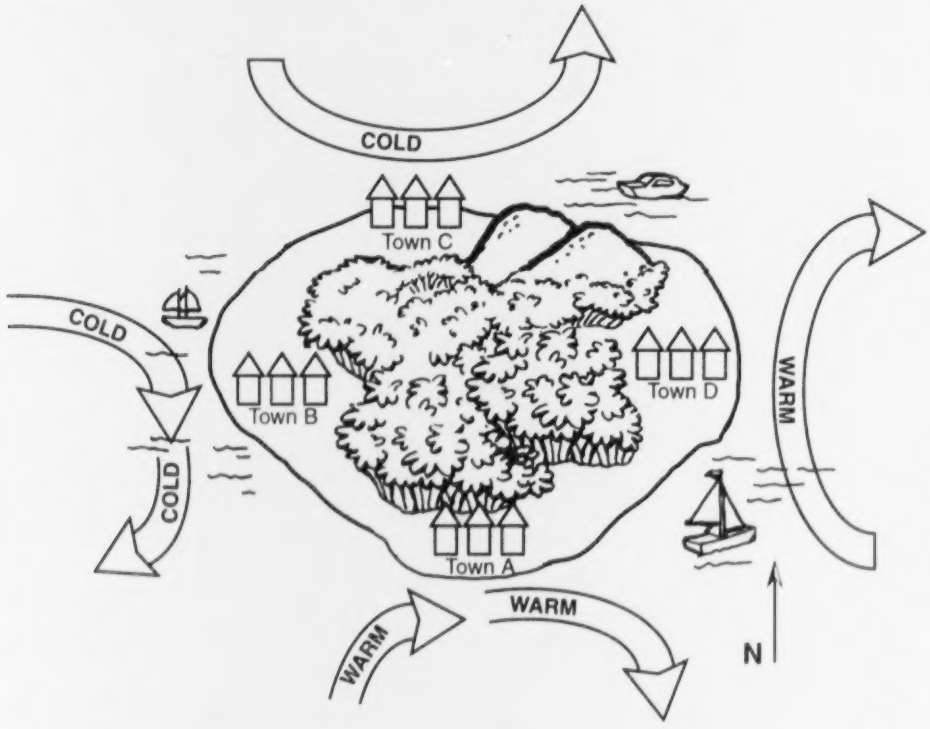
Rationale: The correct answer is D. The Richter scale was devised in 1935 by Charles F. Richter of the California Institute of Technology to measure the magnitude of earthquakes.

Physical Sciences – Energy; Systems

6. An automobile moves because of the transformation of one energy form to another. Which of the sequences below illustrates this transformation?

   * A. chemical — heat — mechanical
   B. chemical — mechanical — heat
   C. mechanical — heat — chemical
   D. heat — mechanical — chemical

Rationale: The correct answer is A. The chemical energy stored in gasoline is converted to heat in the engine and this heat is converted to the mechanical energy that makes the car move.



7. Using the diagram of ocean currents around an island shown above, which town has the warmest climate when the wind blows from the northeast?

   A. Town A
   B. Town B
   C. Town C
   * D. Town D

Rationale: The correct answer is D because winds from the northeast would blow the warm water currents toward the shore at D and create warmer temperatures.

Social Studies (Field Test)

The GEPA Social Studies field test is designed to measure your knowledge of civics (government); history (political, social, cultural, and economic); and geography. The test questions focus on important themes such as conflict and cooperation, changes in technology, movement and social change, democracy, cultures, environmental preservation, etc., in New Jersey, the United States, and the world. For those questions that focus specifically on history, the topics will be drawn from earlier rather than more recent history (i.e., the world to 1700; the United States to 1870).

The test will have 30 multiple-choice questions and two open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions let you choose the one best answer from four choices. They are worth one point each. Open-ended questions have no answer choices. Instead, you will write or, if appropriate, illustrate and label your responses to the questions in the spaces provided in your answer folder. Answers to open-ended questions are scored according to a five-point rubric.

In some questions, you will be reading about a subject or looking at a map, chart, or picture that you've probably never seen or studied before. These questions test your ability to use the information provided—along with what you might already know or be able to do—to draw conclusions, make comparisons, solve problems, or make decisions. Only a small number of questions will require you to remember specific factual information or definitions of terms. Most items are instead designed to see how well you can think critically and use and interpret information.

Pages 41-47 show you the type of questions you might be asked on the GEPA Social Studies test.

GEPA SOCIAL STUDIES
GENERIC SCORING RUBRIC
(for Open-Ended Questions)

Score-Point Description

5-Point Scale

4 A response at this level demonstrates an advanced understanding of the content or concepts. The content and/or concepts are skillfully applied within the given context. The response is thorough, detailed, and accurate. The logic and reasoning used are sophisticated. The treatment of the topic reveals a superior understanding.

3 A response at this level demonstrates an adequate understanding of the content or concepts. The content and/or concepts are applied accurately within the given context. The response is generally complete and accurate, although minor errors may be present. The logic and reasoning employed are justified, but may contain minor flaws. The development of ideas is sufficient to demonstrate understanding.

2 A response at this level demonstrates some understanding of the content or concepts. The response is partially accurate but incomplete. Explanations, if required, are somewhat unclear or inadequately developed. Some evidence of logic or reasoning is present, but it is incomplete or partially flawed. The development of ideas will reveal partial understanding.

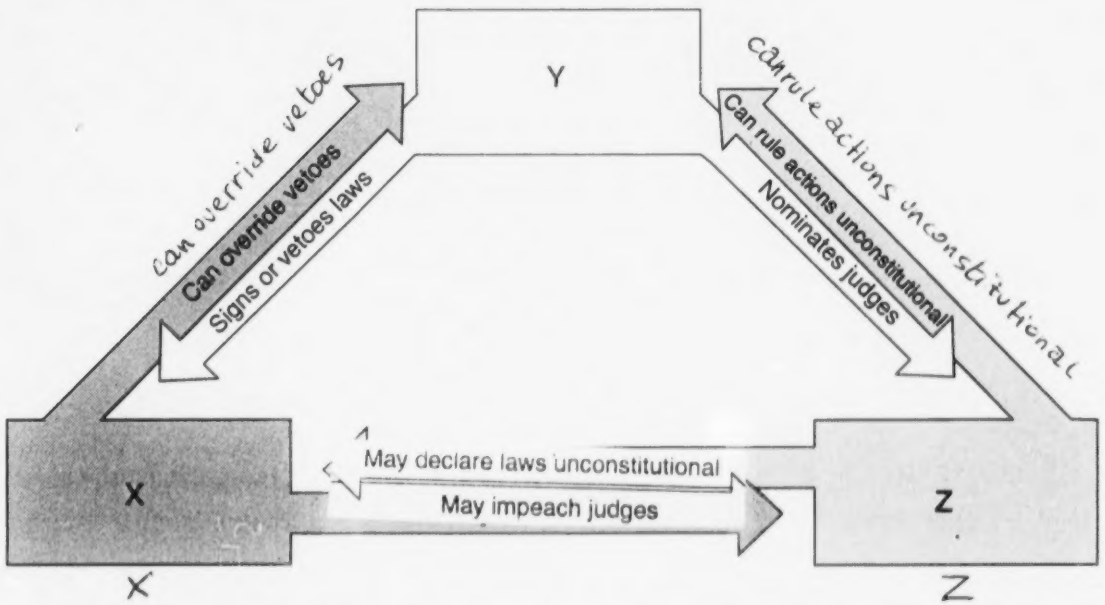
1 A response at this level demonstrates minimal understanding of the content or concepts. The response is largely inaccurate and incomplete. Explanations, if required, are exceedingly vague and/or inaccurate. Logic or reasoning, if in evidence, is exceedingly simplistic and/or seriously flawed. The response typically exhibits minimal development.

0 A response at this level demonstrates no understanding of the content or concepts. The response is totally inaccurate or incomplete. Explanations, if required, are missing or inaccurate. Logic or reasoning is missing or completely flawed.

The purpose of an open-ended question is to allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the content and your ability to communicate that understanding. Open-ended responses do not necessarily require fully developed paragraphs. Depending on the particular question, responses can take several forms, including—but not limited to—outlines, Venn diagrams, charts and graphic organizers, or combinations thereof.

GEPA SOCIAL STUDIES SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Use this chart to answer questions 1 and 2.



1. Which branch of the U.S. government is represented in box X?

   A. judicial branch
   *B. legislative branch
   C. executive branch
   D. administrative branch

2. Which principle of the U.S. government is illustrated by the diagram above?

   A. the elastic clause
   *B. the system of checks and balances
   C. the amendment process
   D. the structure of a bicameral legislature

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3. According to the Supreme Court interpretation of the Bill of Rights, U.S. news reporters who criticize the government's leaders or its policies should be

   A. permitted to do so, provided that lies are avoided.

   B. allowed to publish whatever they wish.

   C. forced to give up their broadcasting license.

   D. required to submit their scripts in advance to a government review board.

4. Throughout United States history, citizens have used many different tactics to attempt to change laws they felt were unjust.

   Suppose you are a member of a group of citizens who wish to challenge a law they think is unfair.

   - Identify **two** First Amendment rights that you could use to challenge such a law.
   - Describe how you could responsibly apply those rights.

5. An excerpt from the N.J. 1776 Constitution:

"All inhabitants of this colony of full age, who are worth fifty pounds...and have resided within the county in which they claim to vote 12 months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote for representation in Council and Assembly..."

Based upon this excerpt, which of the following statements is true?

* A. New Jersey did not withhold voting rights on the basis of gender.
  B. New Jersey did not require voters to own property or other assets.
  C. New Jersey allowed non-residents to vote.
  D. New Jersey allowed any resident to vote.

6. Which of the following did early humans first learn?

* A. to make stone tools
  B. to raise crops
  C. to irrigate dry land
  D. to weave cloth

7. Cultural diffusion occurs fastest in societies that have

  A. traditional social values.
  B. conventional nuclear families.
* C. frequent outside contact.
  D. strong oral history.

8. How did the development of interchangeable parts in manufacturing help revolutionize American industry?

  A. It increased household manufacturing.
* B. It increased the speed of production.
  C. It decreased the need for raw materials.
  D. It decreased trade with other countries.

9. Throughout history, people have used many methods to exchange goods. Which of the following economic means of exchange was first used by people?

* A. barter
  B. minted coins
  C. paper money
  D. rods

1 North America

1 inch = 2900 mi.

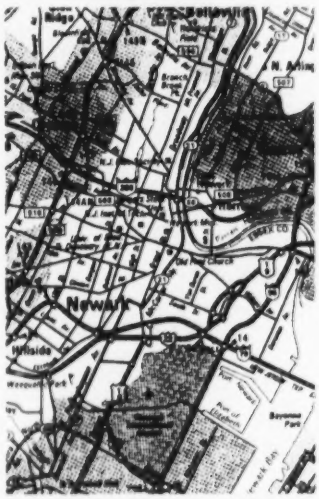
2 Mid-Atlantic States

1 inch = 135 mi.

3 New Jersey

1 inch = 55 mi.

4 Newark



1 inch = 4 mi.

Use the maps above to answer questions 10 and 11.

10. Which map covers the greatest area?

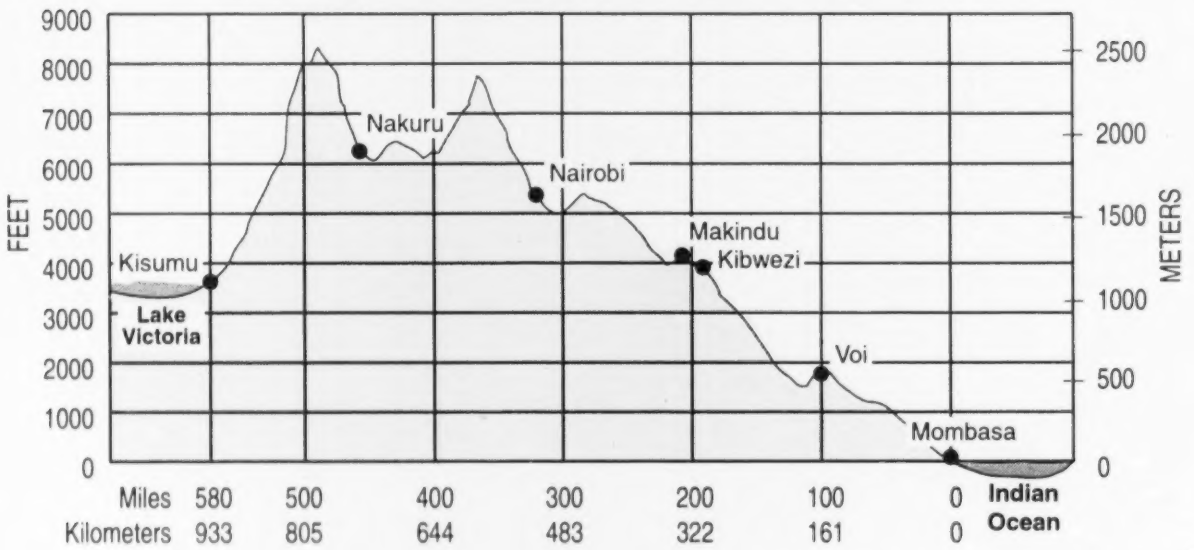
    * A. Map 1
    B. Map 2
    C. Map 3
    D. Map 4

11. Which map would be easiest to use to measure the distance between Trenton and Newark?

    A. Map 1
    B. Map 2
    * C. Map 3
    D. Map 4

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Cross Section of Kenya's Railroad Route:
From the Indian Ocean to Lake Victoria



Use the graphic above to answer questions 12 and 13.

12. Based upon the information found in this chart, which statement about Kenya's geography is accurate?

    A. Lake Victoria is located at a higher elevation than Nairobi.

    B. Kibwezi is approximately 200 miles from Lake Victoria.

    * C. Lake Victoria and Makindu are located at approximately the same elevation.

    D. There are approximately 400 miles between Nakuru and Nairobi.

13. There were many challenges during the construction of Kenya's railroad. What problems does this chart clearly illustrate?

    A. climate and language barriers

    * B. distance covered and land elevation

    C. construction costs and climate

    D. vegetation and number of laborers

14. The world has both physical (natural) and human-made characteristics. Which of the following lists contains only examples of human-made characteristics?

A. Atlas Mountains, Aswan High Dam, and Suez Canal

B. Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square, and Gobi Desert

* C. Erie Canal, New Jersey Turnpike, and Golden Gate Bridge

D. The English Channel, Straits of Dover, and Heathrow Airport

15. Emissions of motor vehicles on New Jersey's roadways continue to affect the air quality in our state.

- What decisions could be made to improve air quality? Identify and explain **four** possible solutions to the exhaust emissions problem in New Jersey.

TM

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)

Your Guide to the GEPA
March 2001

This pamphlet answers the most frequently asked questions about the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) and provides information about its importance to your child's education. This information explains what the GEPA measures, why it is given, how the results are reported, and why it is important for your child to do well.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is the GEPA?

The GEPA is a state test given to eighth graders to measure whether they have gained the knowledge and skills identified in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. These standards, adopted by the State Board of Education, identify what students should know and be able to do at the end of the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. The GEPA replaces the Grade 8 Early Warning Test (EWT), which was administered from 1991 to 1998. The GEPA will help determine whether your child is making satisfactory progress toward mastering the skills he or she will need to pass the new graduation test, the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The HSPA measures eleventh-grade achievement of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The GEPA can help the school determine—and let you know well in advance—if your child will need additional help in order to pass the HSPA in the eleventh grade. In March 2001, eighth-grade students will take the GEPA and receive scores in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. Students will also take a field test in Social Studies. Results of the field test will not be reported but will be used to develop future tests.

2. Why is my child required to take the GEPA?

In 1988, the New Jersey State Legislature passed a law (18A: 7C-6.2) requiring that a test be given to all eighth-grade students in public schools in New Jersey to assess their progress toward mastering the skills they will need to graduate from high school. These skills are now defined in the Core Curriculum Content Standards in the areas of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, World Languages, and Workplace Readiness. In future years, new subject components of the content standards will be added to the GEPA.

3. Are children classified as special education required to take the GEPA?

The GEPA is designed to give your school information about how well all children have mastered the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including children with educational disabilities. Special education students will be working toward achieving the standards at levels appropriate for them and with accommodations they need. These accommodations are defined in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The accommodations should be the same as those used by these students in other classroom testing, and may include Braille, extended testing time, or a different testing site.

Every student with disabilities must take each subject area of the GEPA unless exempted by the IEP because his or her disability is so severe that he or she has not been instructed in the knowledge and skills tested and cannot complete any of the item types on the test. Parents of children with disabilities should discuss participation in the GEPA, and

necessary accommodations, at the child's IEP meeting.

While most special education children will participate in the GEPA testing, there is a small percentage of children with the most severe disabilities for whom some of the content standards are not appropriate. The Department of Education is currently identifying those standards that are appropriate for students with severe disabilities. The department will develop a different kind of test for these children to measure their achievements.

4. Are students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) required to take the GEPA?

A few limited English proficient (LEP) students may not be able to take the test and may be eligible to be exempted. Other LEP students may need accommodations during testing, which can include a translation dictionary, translation of test directions, extended testing time, or a small group testing environment. Parents should meet with the school bilingual/ESL coordinator to discuss appropriate testing accommodations for LEP students.

5. When is the GEPA given?

The GEPA is given to all eighth graders in March over a four-day period. An additional day, March 23, 2001, will be used for field testing new test items for potential future use. Your child will spend approximately two hours each day taking the test. The scheduled test dates for March 2001 are:

Regular Test Dates
March 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2001

Make-Up Test Dates
March 19, 20, 21, and 22, 2001

Field Test Date
March 23, 2001

6. What does the GEPA measure?

The March 2001 GEPA measures achievement of eighth-grade knowledge and skills in the areas of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

On March 14 and 15, 2001, students will take the GEPA's Language Arts Literacy section, which will measure students' achievements in reading and writing. The reading materials require students to read passages and to respond to related items. The passages are selected from published books, newspapers, and magazines, as well as everyday text. Some of the items are multiple choice, while others require students to write their answers in their own words. These questions are called "open-ended" items.

The writing activities require students to write an extended response to a picture they view, to write a persuasive piece, and to revise and edit the text of others.

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics section will be administered on March 13, 2001. The items will measure your child's ability to solve problems by applying mathematical concepts. The skill areas for Mathematics include: number sense; spatial sense and geometry; data analysis; and patterns, functions, and algebra. The Mathematics section contains two types of items. Most are multiple-choice. Others are open-ended and require students to record their own answers or to explain or illustrate how they solve mathematical problems.

SCIENCE

The Science section will be administered on March 12, 2001. The items will measure students' knowledge and skills in three areas—life sciences, physical sciences, and earth sciences. The Science section contains two types of items. Most of the items are multiple choice. Others are open-ended and require students to record their own answers or to explain or illustrate scientific concepts.

7. What types of scores and reports will I receive from the GEPA?

Your student will receive an Individual Student Report that contains his/her scores in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. For all three sections of the test, there will be a total score and subtotals for all the clusters of skills. The total scores will be reported in one of three proficiency levels—Advanced Proficient, Proficient, or Partially Proficient. Scores that fall in the Partially Proficient level indicate that a student has not met the minimum level of proficiency based on this test performance and the student is likely to need additional help to further develop the skills needed to pass the HSPA. A copy of this report must be made available to you; another is kept at the school in your child's file.

8. What happens if my child is Partially Proficient in one or more sections of the GEPA?

Students who are Partially Proficient in one or more sections of the GEPA will be evaluated by the school to determine how to strengthen any skill deficiencies. The school determines final instructional placement for your child by evaluating many factors in conjunction with these test scores.

District boards of education shall provide appropriate instruction to improve skills and knowledge for students performing below the established levels of student proficiency in any content area on the statewide assessments.

9. If my child does well on the GEPA, will he/she still have to take the HSPA?

The GEPA tests the skills that are important for eighth graders to have in order to eventually succeed on the HSPA. The GEPA questions measuring these skills are designed to be appropriate for eighth graders. The HSPA measures eleventh-grade skills. Therefore, your child's GEPA scores cannot substitute for his or her scores on the HSPA. In addition, passing the HSPA is a requirement for high school graduation.

10. How can I find out whether my child is progressing toward learning the required skills?

You should speak first to your child's teachers, particularly those who teach mathematics, English, science, and remedial skills (if applicable). Other school staff who could help you are the principal, the guidance counselor, the basic skills coordinator, the mathematics, science, or English department chairperson, the English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teacher or the bilingual/ESL coordinator if your child has limited English proficiency.

11. What can I do at home to help my child learn the skills measured by the GEPA?

Your child's teachers can suggest specific ways in which you can help your child. In general, you can help by:

- showing an interest in his or her work,
- letting your child know that you have high expectations for his or her work,
- providing a study area,
- setting homework and study time every day,
- asking to see your child's assignments and test results,
- making sure your child attends school regularly, and
- congratulating your child on his or her efforts and achievements.

12. Where can I get help to understand the GEPA scores my child receives?

When you receive your child's GEPA scores, you will also receive a detailed written explanation of what the scores mean. If the explanation does not answer all your questions, you should contact the school guidance counselor or your child's teachers.

13. How will the proficiency levels be set for each test section?

Proficiency levels for the Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics sections of the GEPA were established in June 1999. Using student performance information from the

March 1999 administration of the test, committees of experienced educators recommended the proficiency levels for each of the test sections. With the committees' recommendations, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, adopted the standards which established the proficiency levels. A procedure called statistical equating is used to make sure that all future GEPA Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics tests are at the same level of difficulty as the tests administered in March 1999.

Proficiency levels for the Science section of the GEPA were established in July 2000. Using student performance information from the March 2000 administration of the test, a committee of experienced educators recommended the proficiency levels for the Science section. With the committee's recommendations, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, adopted the standards which established the proficiency levels. A procedure called statistical equating is used to make sure that all future GEPA Science tests are at the same level of difficulty as the one administered in March 2000.

14. How is the GEPA scored?

The multiple-choice items are machine scored by a company hired by the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Student responses to all open-ended items, including the writing responses, are scored by a company contracted by the department. This company has a staff of highly-trained scorers who must have at least a bachelor's degree and who must undergo vigorous and ongoing training and monitoring during the scoring process. Each open-ended item is read independently by two scorers. Responses are evaluated on the completeness, accuracy, and relevance of the information provided by the student.

The student's scores on the multiple-choice and open-ended items in each test section are combined for a total Language Arts Literacy raw score, a total Mathematics raw score, and a total Science raw score. The raw scores are converted into scaled scores, which are the scores that are reported for students in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

15. How can I find out more about the GEPA?

The New Jersey State Department of Education has developed materials to help parents and teachers prepare students for the GEPA. These materials (this pamphlet, for example) are provided through your child's school. Further information about the GEPA and your child's progress toward the development of the skills tested is available at your local school or district office.

Information about the GEPA is also available from the New Jersey State Department of Education, Office of Assessment, PO Box 500, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625-0500, or at the department's website at www.state.nj.us/education

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Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)
Examen de Habilidad para el Octavo Grado
Su Guia al GEPA
Marzo de 2001

Este folleto contesta los sus preguntas que los padres se hacen sobre el Examen de Habilidad para el Octavo Grado (GEPA) y provee información sobre su importancia en la educación de su hijo/a. Esta información le explica los que se.mide el GEPA, por qué se da, cómo se reportan los resultados y por qué es importante que a su hijo/a le vaya bien.

PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS

1. ¿Qué es el GEPA?

El GEPA es un examen estatal que se da a los estudiantes del octavo grado para medir si han adquirido el conocimiento y las destrezas identificadas en las Normas para el Contenido Básico de Estudios (Core Curriculum Content Standards). Estas normas, adoptadas por la Junta de Educación del Estado de Nueva Jersey, identifican lo que los estudiantes deben saber y ser capaces de hacer al final de los grados 4, 8, y 12. El GEPA reemplaza el Examen de Aviso Oportuno Para el Octavo Grado – Grade 8 Early Warning Test (EWT) – que se administró de 1991 a 1998. El GEPA ayudará a determinar si su hijo/a está progresando en forma satisfactoria en el dominio de las habilidades necesarias para pasar el nuevo examen de graduación, el Examen de la Habilidad Escolar Secundario – High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). El HSPA mide el buen éxito de las Normas para el Contenido Básico de Estudios en el onceno grado. El GEPA le indica a la escuela si su hijo/a necesitará ayuda adicional para pasar el HSPA en el onceno grado, para que pueda informarle a usted de antemano. En marzo de 2001, los estudiantes del octavo grado tomarán el GEPA y recibirán notas en las Artes del Idioma, en Matemáticas y en Ciencia. Los estudiantes tomarán también un examen de práctica en Estudios Sociales. Los resultados de estos exámenes de práctica no serán reportados, sino se usarán para desarrollar exámenes futuros.

2. ¿Por qué tiene que tomar mi hijo/a el GEPA?

En 1988, la Legislatura Estatal de Nueva Jersey pasó una ley (18A: 7C-6.2) que requiere que todos los estudiantes del octavo grado de las escuelas públicas de Nueva Jersey tomen un examen. Este examen evalúa su progreso en el dominio de las destrezas necesarias para graduarse de la escuela secundaria. Estas destrezas están definidas ahora en las Normas para el Contenido Básico de Estudios en las áreas de las Artes del Idioma, Matemáticas, Ciencia, Artes Visuales y Teatrales, Estudios Sociales, Salud y Educación Física, Lenguas del Mundo, y Preparación para el Mundo de Trabajo. En años futuros, se añadirán al GEPA nuevos componentes temáticos de las normas de contenido.

3. ¿Es un requisito que los niños clasificados con necesidades especiales tomen el GEPA?

El GEPA informa a su escuela el progreso de todos los estudiantes en el dominio de las Normas para el Contenido Básico de Estudios, incluso los niños con necesidades especiales. Los estudiantes de educación especial trabajarán para alcanzar las normas a niveles apropiados para ellos y con los ajustes que necesiten. La definición de éstos aparece en sus Programas de Educación Individualizada – Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Las modificaciones deberían ser las mismas que aquellas usadas por estos estudiantes en otros exámenes en la clase y pueden incluir la versión en Braille, más tiempo para tomar el examen, o un sitio distinto donde tomarlo.

Cada estudiante con necesidades especiales debe tomar todas las secciones del GEPA, a menos que haya sido excusado por el IEP porque su limitación sea tan severa que no ha recibido instrucción en el conocimiento y las destrezas que contiene el examen y no puede responder a ningunos de los varios tipos de preguntas del examen. Los padres de niños con necesidades especiales deben hablar de la participación en el GEPA y las acomodaciones necesarias, en la reunión del IEP del niño.

Aunque habrá un gran número de niños que reciben educación especial participando en los exámenes del GEPA, habrá un pequeño porcentaje con limitaciones tan severas para los cuales las normas no son apropiadas. Actualmente, el Departamento de Educación está identificando las normas que son apropiadas para estudiantes con severas incapacidades. El departamento desarrollará un tipo diferente de examen para medir los progresos de esos niños.

4. ¿Deben tomar el GEPA los estudiantes con proficiencia limitada en el idioma inglés (limited English proficient - LEP)?

Algunos estudiantes con proficiencia limitada en el idioma inglés (LEP) no podrán tomar el examen y es posible que se le excusen. Otros estudiantes con LEP pueden requerir acomodaciones durante los exámenes, lo cual puede incluir un diccionario bilingüe, traducción de las instrucciones del examen, más tiempo para tomarlo o un ambiente de examen en grupos pequeños. Los padres deberán reunirse con el coordinador bilingüe/ESL de la escuela para discutir las acomodaciones apropiadas para exámenes de estudiantes LEP.

5. ¿Cuándo se administra el GEPA?

Todos los estudiantes del octavo grado toman el GEPA en el mes de marzo, y dura cuatro días. Un día adicional, el 23 de marzo de 2001, los estudiantes tomarán un examen de práctica que incluye preguntas que se usarán para examenes en el futuro. Su hijo/a pasará unas dos horas y media cada día tomando el examen. Las fechas del examen de 2001 son las siguientes:

Fechas de los Examenes Regulares
12, 13, 14, y 15 de marzo de 2001

Fechas de los Examenes Completivos
19, 20, 21, y 22 de marzo de 2001

Fechas del Examen de Práctica
23 de marzo de 2001

6. ¿Qué prueba el GEPA?

El GEPA de 2001 mide competencia en las destrezas de los estudiantes del octavo grado en las áreas de las Artes del Idioma, Matemáticas y Ciencia.

LAS ARTES DEL IDIOMA

Los días 14 y 15 de marzo, los estudiantes tomarán el examen de las Artes del Idioma del GEPA, que mide los progresos de los estudiantes en lectura y composición. Los materiales de lectura requieren que los estudiantes lean pasajes y respondan a preguntas relacionadas. Los pasajes son escogidos de libros publicados, periódicos y revistas, así como de textos con temas de rutina diaria. Algunas de las preguntas son de selección múltiple y otras requieren que los estudiantes respundan en sus propias palabras. Estas preguntas se conocen "preguntas abiertas."

Las actividades de Composición requieren que los estudiantes escriban una respuesta extensa sobre una ilustración que observan. También, los estudiantes escriben una composición persuasiva y revisan y corregen los textos de otros.

MATEMÁTICAS

El examen de Matemáticas será administrado el 13 de marzo de 2001. Las preguntas medirán la habilidad de resolver problemas en las áreas de Matemáticas que incluyen: sentido de número; sentido espacial y geometría; análisis de datos, patrones, funciones y álgebra. La sección de Matemáticas contiene dos tipos de preguntas. La mayoría son de selección múltiple. Otras son abiertas y requieren que los estudiantes marquen sus respuestas, o que expliquen o ilustren su modo de resolver los problemas.

CIENCIA

La sección de Ciencia será administrada el 12 de marzo de 2001. Las preguntas medirán el conocimiento y las destrezas de los estudiantes en tres áreas – Ciencias de la vida, Ciencias físicas, y Ciencias de la tierra. La sección de Ciencia contiene dos tipos de preguntas. La mayoría de las preguntas son de selección múltiple. Otras son abiertas y requieren que los estudiantes escriban sus propias respuestas o que expliquen o ilustren conceptos científicos.

7. ¿Qué tipos de resultados y reportes recibiré sobre el GEPA?

Su hijo/a estudiante recibirá un Reporte Individual de Estudiante (Individual Student Report) que tendrá los resultados en las Artes del Idioma, Matemáticas, y Ciencia. Para cada una de las tres secciones del examen, habrá una nota total y notas subtotales de cada grupo de destrezas. Los resultados totales serán reportados en uno de tres niveles de proficiencia: avanzado, hábil o parcialmente hábil. Los resultados que corresponden al nivel parcialmente hábil indican que el estudiante no ha alcanzado el nivel mínimo de habilidad. Estos estudiantes necesitarán instrucción adicional para desarrollar las destrezas necesarias para pasar el HSPA. Una copia de este reporte estará a su disposición; otra la guarda la escuela en el expediente estudiantil.

8. ¿Qué sucede si mi hijo es parcialmente hábil en una o más secciones del GEPA?

Los estudiantes que son parcialmente hábiles en una o más secciones del GEPA recibirán una evaluación por la escuela para determinar cómo remediar cualquier deficiencia de destrezas. La

escuela determina el programa instruccional final para su hijo/a, evaluando muchos factores, junto con las notas de estos exámenes.

Las juntas de educaión deben proveer instrucción apropiada para mejuarar las destrezas y el conocimiento para los estudiantes que no realizan los niveles establecidos de proficiencia.

9. ¿Si a mi hijo/a le va bien en el GEPA, tendrá que tomar todavía el HSPA?

El GEPA examina las destrezas importantes que los estudiantes del octavo grado necesitarán para tener éxito en el HSPA. Las preguntas del GEPA que miden tales destrezas han sido diseñadas para los estudiantes del octavo grado. El HSPA medirá las destrezas del onceno grado. Por lo tanto, los resultados del GEPA no pueden sustituir los resultados del HSPA. Además, pasar el HSPA es un requisito para la graduación en la escuela secundaria.

10. ¿Cómo puedo averiguar si mi hijo/a está progresando en el aprendizaje de las destrezas requeridas?

Primeramente, usted debe hablar con los maestros, en particular con los que enseñan matemáticas, inglés, ciencia y destrezas remediales (si es aplicable). Otros miembros del personal de la escuela que pueden ayudarle son el principal, el asesor académico, el coordinador de destrezas básicas, el director del departamento de matemáticas o inglés, el maestro de inglés como segundo idioma (ESL) o el coordinador bilingüe/ESL si su hijo/a tiene capacidad limitada en el idioma inglés.

11. ¿Qué puedo hacer en casa para ayudar a mi hijo/a en el desarrollo de las destrezas que se miden en el GEPA?

Los maestros de su hijo/a pueden sugerir maneras específicas para ayudar a su hijo/a. Por lo general, usted puede ayudarle de la siguiente manera:

- mostrar interés en sus estudios;
- hacerle entender que usted tiene grandes esperanzas en su trabajo;
- designar un lugar donde pueda estudiar;
- designar un período de tiempo; diariamente para el estudio y las tareas escolares;
- repasar sus tareas escolares y los resultados de sus exámenes;
- asegurarse de que asiste a la escuela con regularidad; y
- felicitar a su hijo/a por sus esfuerzos escolares y los buenos éxitos en sus estudios.

12. ¿Dónde puedo obtener ayuda para entender los resultados del GEPA de mi hijo/a?

Cuando usted reciba los resultados del GEPA, también recibirá una explicación detallada por escrito de lo que significan los resultados. Si la explicación no responde a todas sus preguntas, comunícase con el asesor académico de la escuela o con los maestros de su hijo/a.

13. ¿Cómo se determinarán los niveles de habilidad para cada sección del examen?

Los niveles de habilidad para las secciones de Artes del Idioma y Matemáticas del GEPA, se establecieron en junio de 1999. Usando la información sobre efectividad derivada de la administración del examen en marzo de 1999, comités de educadores con experiencia recomendaron los niveles de habilidad para cada una de las secciones del examen. Bajo las recomendaciones de los comités, la Junta Estatal de Educación, en consulta con el Comisionado de Educación, adoptó las normas que estableceron los niveles de habilidades. Se utilizó un proceso denominado *ecuación estadística* para asegurar que todas las formas futuras del GEPA tengan el mismo nivel de dificultad que la forma administrada en marzo de 1999.

Los nivel es de habilidad para la sección de Ciencia del GEPA, se establecerán en julio de 2000, usando la información sobre efectividad derivada de la administración del examen en marzo de 2000. Un comité de educadores con experiencia recomendó los niveles de proficiencia para la sección de Ciencia. Bajo las recomendaciones del comité, la Junta Estatal de Educación adoptó las normas que estableceron los niveles de habilidad. Se utilizó un proceso denominado *ecuación estadística* para asequarar que todas las formas futuras de la prueba de Ciencia del GEPA tengan el mismo nivel de dificultad que la forma administrada en marzo de 2000.

14. ¿Cómo se evalúa el GEPA?

Las preguntas de selección múltiple son evaluadas por una compañía contratada por el Departamento de Educación del Estado de Nueva Jersey. Una compañía también contratada por el departamento evalúa las respuestas de los estudiantes a las preguntas abiertas, y las respuestas escritas. Esta compañía emplea evaluadores muy educados que tienen a lo menos un bachillerato y que se someten al entrenamiento y control riguroso y contínuo durante el proceso de evaluación. Cada una de las preguntas abiertas es leída independientemente por dos evaluadores. La evaluación de las respuestas es

basada en la información presentada por el estudiante, si está completa, correcta, y pertinente.

Las notas obtenidas por los estudiantes en las preguntas abiertas y de selección múltiple en cada sección del examen se combinan para obtener una nota bruta total de las Artes del Idioma, una nota bruta total de Matemáticas y una nota bruta total de Ciencia. Las notas brutas se convierten entonces a notas de escala, que son las notas reportadas para los estudiantes en las Artes del Idioma, Matemáticas y Ciencia.

15. ¿Cómo puedo recibir más información sobre el GEPA?

El Departamento de Educación del Estado de Nueva Jersey ha desarrollado materiales para ayudar a los padres y maestros a preparar a los estudiantes para el GEPA. Estos materiales (como este folleto, por ejemplo) se proveen a través de la escuela de su hijo/a. Su escuela o las oficinas del distrito escolar tienen disponible más información sobre el GEPA y sobre el progreso de su hijo/a hacia el desarrollo de las destrezas que se prueban en el examen.

También hay disponible información sobre el GEPA a través del New Jersey State Department of Education, Office of Assessment, PO 500, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625-0500 o al espacio web del departmento a www.state.nj.us/education.

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